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MR. LINCOLN AND MR. SEWARD.

Remarks upon the Memorial Address of Charles Francis Adams on the late William H. Seward.

THIRD PAPER

DIFFERENCES existed in the Cabinet and the country in 1861 on some of the measures and the course of policy which the Government should pursue toward the secessionists. The questions presented were in some respects novel and without precedent, as was the insurrection itself. Hostilities were precipitated within forty days of the inauguration, before the Administration was fully established in place, or had time to develop its policy. The assault on the flag at Charleston compelled immediate action. The proclamation promptly issued for seventy-five thousand volunteers also declared a blockade of the Southern ports. There was entire unanimity in the Cabinet on all points in the proclamation except that of a blockade, which was questioned as a doubtful and irregular proceeding; for the conflict, whether an insurrection or rebellion, was purely domestic—a civil war and not a foreign war; and it was thought the internal dissensions in our own territory should be confined within our own borders. A majority of the Cabinet, therefore, preferred an embargo or suspension of intercourse with that part of the country to a blockade, and maintained it to be the true policy of the Government to close the ports and interdict commerce with the insurgents until the rebellion was suppressed. It was claimed that a blockade was not a domestic but an international question—legitimate and proper as between two distinct nations, but that we could not properly blockade our own ports, though we might shut them up, prohibit traffic from abroad by law, and make its violation a criminal offence; that the very fact of a blockade of the whole rebel territory would raise them to the level of belligerents—a concession to the Confederate organization virtually admitting it to be a quasi government—giving that organization a position among nations that we would not and could not recognize or sanction, and which would inevitably lead to embarrassments. But the subject was in some of its aspects novel, and the Secretary of State, though sometimes rash, had not the bold and vigorous mind to assert and maintain a right principle if fraught with doubt and difficulty, provided there was an easier path. The blockade, he thought, opened up a way. The questions of blockade were well settled and clearly defined, the authority and precedents explicit; and he therefore preferred to adopt that course, shelter himself under those precedents, and apply international law to a strictly national and domestic controversy, rather than assert a measure and vindicate an important principle affecting national rights. Less was said in the confusion and proceedings which came like an avalanche at that critical moment upon the Administration, than at a later period. Two members of the Cabinet said they had bestowed very slight examination upon the subject, and as it related to foreign intercourse they deferred to the Secretary of State, who had given it special attention, and also cited authorities justifying an exclusion of commerce from national ports in the equitable form of blockade. President Lincoln inclined to that view, and when Mr. Seward asserted that one great object of the blockade instead of a closure of the ports was to avoid complications which would be likely to involve us in a foreign war, the question was decided. The President said we could not afford to have two wars on our hands at once, and a blockade was ordered. The authority and the right of the national Government to close ports within its jurisdiction was controverted by no one, though a blockade was. Mr. Seward himself, in his despatch of the 8th of June to Mr. Adams, said: "We claim to have a right to close the ports which have been seized by insurrectionists for the purpose of suppressing the attempted revolution, and no one could justly complain if we had done so decisively and peremptorily."

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But the English Government, as soon as information was obtained of differences in the American Cabinet, made haste to force us to adhere to the blockade, which would be an acknowledgment of belligerent rights to the rebels, by indirectly admonishing us of its views and intentions in a debate promptly got up in Parliament for the purpose on the 27th of June, immediately on the receipt of Mr. Seward's despatch. Lord John Russell in that debate announced the interpolation of a new doctrine by the British Government into international law, by declaring to the feeble government of New Granada, "It is not competent for its government to close its ports that are *de facto* in possession of the insurgents."

The debate, ostensibly on the affairs of New Granada, was evidently and unmistakably intended as an admonition and menace to the United States, then engaged in suppressing insurrection. In a despatch of the 28th of June from our Minister in London, just twenty days after Mr. Seward's despatch of the 8th of June claiming our right to close the ports, Mr. Adams wrote the Secretary of State that in an interview with Lord John Russell, "His Lordship then said something about difficulties in New Granada, and the intelligence that the insurgents had undertaken to close several of their ports. But the law officers here told him that this could not be done as against foreign nations, excepting by the regular form of blockade. He did not know what we thought about it, but he had observed that some such plan was likely to be adopted at the coming session of Congress in regard to the ports of those whom we considered as insurgents." His lordship also on the 27th of June announced in Parliament that "the opinion of Her Majesty's Government after taking legal advice is, that it is perfectly competent for the government of a country in a state of tranquillity to say which ports shall be open to trade and which shall be closed; but in the event of insurrection or civil war in that country, it is not competent for its government to close its ports that are *de facto* in the hands of the insurgents, as that would be an invasion of international law with regard to blockade."

Congress when it convened in special session in July, a few days after this English menace, totally unmindful of "the opinion of Her Majesty's Government after taking legal advice," but under the counsel and deliberate conclusion of our wisest and ablest legislators and statesmen, and in total disregard of the policy of our own Secretary of State as well as of Her Majesty's Government, declined to commit itself to the blockade, and in explicit and emphatic language authorized, by the act of the 13th of July, a closure of the ports. Mr. Seward was constrained, under these circumstances and under the direction of President Lincoln, on the 21st of July, to tell Mr. Adams that "Since your conversation with Lord John Russell, the Congress of the United States has by law asserted the right of this Government to close the ports of this country which have been seized by the insurgents. The connecting by Lord John Russell of that measure when it was in prospect with what had taken place in regard to a law of New Granada, gives to the remarks which he made to you a significance that requires no especial illustration. The President fully agrees with Congress in the principle of the law which authorizes him to close the ports which have been seized by the insurgents, and he will put into execution and maintain it with all the means at his command, at the hazard of whatever consequences, whenever it shall appear that the safety of the nation requires it."

It is not expedient, perhaps, to follow up in its details a subject not particularly creditable to our diplomacy and to the maintenance of our national rights, further than to allude briefly to the historic facts. The brave words of the Secretary of State, uttered on the 21st of July, were not enforced. Mr. Adams, in a despatch of the 16th of August, says he took occasion to intimate to Lord John Russell that "he must not infer from my not having entered into discussion of the merits of the question, that I gave any assent to the position taken by him about the right of a government to close its own ports, when held by forcible possession of persons resisting its authority. On the contrary, I desired to reserve for my government the treatment of it as an open question whenever it should take any practical shape. In the mean time I had every reason to believe that it was the design of the President to persevere in the blockade," etc. His lordship declared in Parliament, however, that he considered the law of Con-

gress "as merely giving a discretionary power. But if carried into practice, he construed it as putting an end to the blockade." Under these threats our Government tamely submitted. The law of Congress was not carried into effect, our diplomacy was meek and yielding, and under British menace the blockade of our own ports, by our own ships, was continued.

On the 21 of September the Secretary of State, with some trepidation, informed the Minister that "no change of policy in regard to the blockade has been adopted"—a timid intimation of acquiescence in an insult and injury, to appease British arrogance; her ministry believing and asserting that an effective blockade of our extensive coast was impossible, but in no other way could commerce be interdicted. Our Government did not close the ports, but under the hint given by the English dictum to New Granada, it abstained from exercising the national authority, and was passive and submissive. In all this time, while treating the Confederates as belligerents, and their organization as a quasi government, the Secretary of State, with strange inconsistency, denounced their cruisers as pirates.

Not until the 9th of April, 1865, after Richmond had fallen, and only three days before the assassination of President Lincoln, was a proclamation issued, in pursuance of the act of Congress of the 13th of July, 1861, to close the ports of the Southern States. Until the war had virtually ceased, the law of Congress was not enforced. The British mandate to New Granada was tamely acquiesced in and obsequiously observed by the United States. Our ports were not closed, but blockaded, which eventuated, as was intended, in establishing throughout the war the English ports of Nassau, Bermuda, and Halifax as entrepots for illicit traffic with the rebels and resorts for rebel cruisers, to harass and destroy our commerce. It opened the English ports throughout the world to the Alabama, and rovers of her class, which swept our merchant ships from the ocean for the benefit of England.

On the subject of a blockade of our own ports by our own vessels, Mr. Seward had undoubtedly, for good or for evil, influence with the President which outweighed a majority of the Cabinet and Congress. The subject was new to him when his decision was given, and the blockade being made effective by the navy, he did not care to reopen a disturbing question, though his views became modified, and ultimately the ports were closed, notwithstanding the English dictum to New Granada.

The management of our foreign affairs, and the maintenance of our rights against the pretensions and menaces of the arrogant ministry of England, thus commenced, was continued, until intelligent Englishmen themselves were surprised if not disgusted with our subserviency. After the shameful renunciation of our right to send into the courts mails from captured vessels—a right recognized and established by the usage of nations, and made a duty by our own statutes—an eminent English publicist, Sir Vernon Hawksworth, amazed at our submissive and pusillanimous diplomacy, warned his government against proceeding too far in its demands, "for," said he, "*what we have most to fear is not that Americans will yield too little, but that we shall accept too much.*" A humiliating commentary on our diplomacy, by an English writer of no mean ability.

The relation of the circumstances attending the capture and release of the rebel emissaries, Mason and Slidell, is pregnant with error. The excitement which accompanied the intelligence of the capture of these mischievous men was great, and had at one time a threatening aspect. The final disposition of the question, with the restoration of the prisoners to British authority, might well be mentioned as displaying the marked and in some respects perhaps happy trait of Mr. Seward in adapting himself to circumstances which he could not control. But Mr. Adams fails to bring out that shrewd diplomatic quality of Mr. Seward's mind, and strives to inculcate an impression that the Secretary of State stood alone; was wise, sagacious, reserved, and profound, when others were blind, precipitate, and weak; took upon himself "the whole weight of popular indignation," and, "like the Roman Curtius, who leaped into the abyss which could have been closed in no other way," he offered himself a sacrifice to secure the safety of the State. Mr. Seward should receive credit for the dexterous and skilful despatch which he prepared on his own change of position. It exhibits his readiness and peculiar tact and ability to extricate him

self from and to pass over difficulties. But in point of fact no man was more elated or jubilant over the capture of the emissaries than Mr. Seward, who for a time made no attempt to conceal his gratification and approval of the act of Wilkes. But while he and most of the Cabinet and country were hilarious, the President had doubts, misgivings, and regrets, which were increased after an interview with Senator Sumner, with whom he often—sometimes to the disgust and annoyance of Mr. Seward—advised on controverted or disputed international questions, and especially when there were differences between himself and the Secretary of State.

On the question of giving up the emissaries, Mr. Adams says: "When the time came for the assembly of the Cabinet, not a sign had been given by the President, or any of the members, favorable to concession. Mr. Seward, who had been charged with the official duty of furnishing the expected answer, assumed the responsibility of preparing his able argument, upon which a decision was made to surrender the men. Upon him would have rested the whole weight of popular indignation had it proved formidable. If I have been rightly informed, when read it met with few comments and less approbation. On the other hand, there was no resistance. Silence gave consent. It was the act of Mr. Seward, and his name was to be associated with it, whether for good or for evil."

The truth is, not only had the President expressed his doubts of the legality of the capture, and had them increased, while Mr. Seward was rejoicing over and approving of the proceeding, but Mr. Blair from the first had denounced the act as unauthorized, irregular, and illegal. Not being a special admirer of Wilkes, Mr. Blair recommended that Wilkes should be ordered to take the Iroquois and go with Mason and Slidell to England, and deliver them to the British government; for Palmerston and Russell would, he said, seize the occasion to make war. The prompt and voluntary disavowal of the act of Wilkes, and delivering over the prisoners, would have evinced our confidence in our own power, and been a manifestation of our indifference and contempt for the emissaries, and a rebuke to the alleged intrigues between the rebels and the English Cabinet. Mr. Seward took a totally different view; scouted the idea of letting the prisoners go; said the British did not want them, and we could not think of delivering them up. While Mr. Blair did not go about at the time proclaiming his opinions on a subject which was under consideration, his dissent from the original views of the Secretary of State, and condemnation of the act of Wilkes, are notorious among those who were intimate with the transactions of the Government. The time for further withholding the facts, and permitting men like Mr. Adams to be misled, has gone by. The truth in relation to these and other matters, so long perverted and suppressed, should be known, and history set right.

Nearly every member of the Administration, like Mr. Seward, rejoiced in the capture of these mischievous men. No one coincided with Mr. Blair in his suggestion to compel Wilkes to return them to the custody of Great Britain, however wise it may have been in view of subsequent events. But the irregular action of Wilkes in this case was in various ways the cause of serious embarrassment. If the proceedings could not be fully justified, neither could they, in the then condition of affairs, and the excited state of public feeling, be censured and condemned. But the Secretary of the Navy, before hearing from Great Britain, before even the Administration had passed upon the subject, was compelled to recognize and approve or disapprove the act, and communicate the transaction in his annual navy report, just then to be submitted to the President and Congress. In that report, and in a congratulatory letter of the 30th of November, allusion is made to the irregularity of Wilkes, which, it is suggested, might be excused in view of the patriotic motives; "but it must by no means be permitted to constitute a precedent hereafter for the treatment of any similar infraction of neutral obligations by foreign vessels engaged in commerce or the carrying trade." This report, though bearing date of the 2d of December, the day on which Congress convened, was, as is usual with annual reports, delivered complete to the President at the last regular Cabinet meeting preceding the session, which was on Friday, the 29th of November, 1861, to be transmitted with the message. Of course the naval report was seen on that day by Mr. Sew-

ard, who until then had taken no exception to the capture; but on the succeeding day, the 30th of November, the date of the congratulatory letter to Wilkes, he wrote to Mr. Adams what the latter gentleman calls the "preliminary despatch that saved the dignity of the country."

These matters, it will be borne in mind, were weeks before hearing from England, and before Mr. Seward's elaborate answer of the 26th of December to the demand of the British government for the surrender of the emissaries. When Mr. Adams declares that "not a sign had been given by the President or any member of the Cabinet favorable to concession," at the time that answer was prepared, he commits an egregious mistake. The President was from the first willing to make concession. Mr. Blair advocated it. Mr. Seward was at the beginning opposed to any idea of concession which involved giving up the emissaries, but yielded at once, and with dexterity, to the peremptory demand of Great Britain. Let him have all the applause which belongs to him for the facility and diplomatic skill which he displayed in that change, but in doing so it is unjust to the President and others to misrepresent them, or to mistake or pervert the facts in regard to them or Mr. Seward.

The incidents selected from among many indicate something of the managing expediency, fertility of resources, and administrative manner of Mr. Seward, and illustrate the "superior intellectual power" and "force of moral discipline" which the "Memorial Address" undertakes to say enabled him to "direct affairs for the benefit of the nation, through the name of another." Acting at times from impulse, often without sufficient forethought of consequences—fond of displaying power—frequently exercising questionable authority—prompted in some degree by jobbing and lobby surroundings which, fostered at Albany and defeated at Chicago, followed him to Washington, where not a few of those followers contrived to grow rich as the country grew poor, Mr. Seward attempted and did many things which could scarcely be justified, but for which the Administration was responsible. It would be unjust to throw his eccentricities and errors upon others, and award to him the honors and credit of successful measures of administration which he did not originate.

The President, never unreasonably obstinate or wilful, was ever lenient and forbearing, even when his intentions were defeated, and sometimes yielded to proceedings that his judgment did not fully approve. In the generosity of his nature he was tolerant of acts where a more arbitrary and imperious mind would have been implacable and unforgiving. There were occasions, however, when, relying on his own convictions, and the exigency being great, he exercised the executive will—the one-man power—with intelligent determination and effect. His promptness and energy in an emergency were displayed on one memorable occasion, when danger was imminent and immediate decision necessary. It may be mentioned as illustrative of his executive ability, promptness, and self-reliance; for it was in the absence of Mr. Seward, and when those on whom he had a right to rely failed him and were despondent. Gloom and national disaster were upon the country, but the President met the crisis with firmness, rose with the exigency, and, independent of his Cabinet and against the general sentiment of the people, and by a sacrifice of personal feeling, adopted a course which results justified, and proved his ability as chief.

In the early period of the war the proceedings and operations of the military commanders were unsatisfactory, and nowhere equalled the general expectation. Too much was doubtless expected and too little accomplished. None were more disappointed or depressed by the slow progress made than the President himself. For a period he had hopes from McClellan, whose talents at organization were displayed to advantage when, in the summer of 1861, he took command at Washington, established order, and enforced good military administration. In some respects the President esteemed him to be superior to any of the generals with whom he had come in contact; but the autumn wore away in dilatory parades. With the change in the War Department in January, 1862, came the hostility of Secretary Stanton to McClellan, then General-in-Chief. The hesitating movements of that officer weakened the confidence of the President in his energy and military power. He still believed, however, that the General had superior military capacity and intelligence, but that he was inert, infirm of purpose; not quite ready to

do all that he had the ability to accomplish. He required pushing, and the President therefore took upon himself to order a forward movement of both the army and navy. But McClellan continued tardy, and the winter and spring delays, followed by the sluggish movements on the York peninsula and the reverses before Richmond, discouraged and greatly disheartened not only the President but the whole country. At this juncture, when, with large armies under him, he had more than he could perform in the line of his profession, McClellan in July wrote from his headquarters a very injudicious, not to say impertinent letter to the President in relation to the civil administration and the political conduct of affairs. This unwise letter, and the reverses of the army, with the active hostility of Stanton, brought Halleck, a vastly inferior man, to Washington. General Pope had preceded him, and, by an executive order creating the army of Virginia, had been placed in command of that army, then in front of Washington, to the infinite disgust of some of the older generals. This disgust was increased by his public gasconading proclamation reflecting on the proceedings of his seniors—on their "lines of retreat and bases of supplies," which must, he said, thenceforward be discarded. These blatant bulletins, instead of inspiriting the men, caused ridicule in the ranks. The soldiers were attached to their old officers, particularly to McClellan, and to a great extent sympathized with him and other generals in their dislike, almost contempt, of this junior commander. Pope had been brought from the West directly after Halleck reported he had accomplished extraordinary achievements—reports grossly untrue, and which Pope himself afterward refuted. On coming to Washington, Pope, who was ardent, and I think courageous, though not always discreet, very naturally fell into the views of Secretary Stanton, who improved every opportunity to denounce McClellan and his hesitating policy. Pope also reciprocated the commendations bestowed on him by Halleck, by uniting with Stanton and General Scott in advising that McClellan should be superseded, and Halleck placed in charge of military affairs at Washington. This, combined with the movements and the disasters before Richmond, enabled Stanton to get rid of McClellan at headquarters. One of the first orders of Halleck on reaching Washington after superseding McClellan, was for the withdrawal of the army of the Potomac from the vicinity of Richmond. This brought McClellan and his generals with their commands to the assistance of Pope, for whom they not only entertained no special regard, but some of them absolute hate. The orders to reinforce and assist Pope were consequently not obeyed with alacrity. There is no denying the fact that professional pride was allowed to encroach on patriotic duty in that momentous period. The selection of Pope to command that army may have been injudicious; he may not have been the man to take in hand and wield the immense force which met Lee and Jackson at the front; there may have been error on the part of Stanton and Halleck as well as Pope in slighting some of the older generals; the enmity of the Secretary of War toward McClellan may not without reason have been felt by him and his favorites as unjust; yet the welfare of the republic should not have been put in jeopardy to gratify personal, official, or professional resentments. The general in command, whether young or old, should at such a crisis have been earnestly and in good faith sustained. Had that been the case, the results of the second battle at Manassas or Bull Run might have been different. But Pope was defeated, and the army, sadly demoralized, came retreating to the Potomac. The War Department, and especially Stanton and Halleck, became greatly alarmed. On the 30th of August, in the midst of these disasters and before the result had reached us, though most damaging information in regard to McClellan, who lingered at Alexandria, was current, the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Chase, called upon me with a protest, signed by himself and Stanton, denouncing the conduct of McClellan and demanding his immediate dismissal. Two other members were ready to append their names after mine. I declined to sign the paper, which was in the handwriting of Stanton, not that I did not disapprove of the course of the General, but because the combination was improper and disrespectful to the President, who had selected his Cabinet to consult and advise with, not to conspire against him; besides, some of the charges or allusions in the paper I knew nothing of, and I had doubted the wisdom of recalling the army of the Potomac from Richmond, therein differing

from Chase and Stanton. The object in bringing that army back to Washington in order to start anew, march overland, and regain the abandoned position, I did not understand unless it was to get rid of McClellan; and if that was the object it would have been much better to place another general at the head of the army while it was yet on the James. But a majority of the Cabinet finally united in this proceeding, and on Monday, the 1st of September, the paper, somewhat modified and signed by four of the Cabinet officers, was brought me. Mr. Seward was at the time absent from Washington—I never doubted purposely absent—and not of the number. My refusal and perhaps my remarks prevented the matter from proceeding further. The indignation against McClellan was at the time intense in Washington and the country. The President never knew of this paper, but was not unaware of the popular feeling, in which he sympathized, and of the sentiments of the members of the Cabinet, aggravated by the hostility and strong if not exaggerated rumors sent out by the Secretary of War. Both Stanton and Halleck were, however, filled with apprehensions beyond others, as the army of stragglers and broken battalions on the last of August and first of September came rushing toward Washington.

At the stated Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, the 2d of September, while the whole community was stirred up and in confusion, and affairs were gloomy beyond anything that had previously occurred, Stanton entered the council room a few moments in advance of Mr. Lincoln and said, with great excitement, he had just learned from General Halleck that the President had placed McClellan in command of the forces in Washington. The information was surprising, and, in view of the prevailing excitement against that officer, alarming. The President soon came in, and in answer to an inquiry from Mr. Chase, confirmed what Stanton had stated. General regret was expressed, and Stanton with some feeling remarked that no order to that effect had issued from the War Department. The President, calmly but with some emphasis, said the order was his, and he would be responsible for it to the country. With a retreating and demoralized army tumbling in upon us, and alarm and panic in the community, it was necessary, the President said, that something should be done, but there seemed to be no one to do it. He therefore had directed McClellan, who knew this whole ground, who was the best organizer in the army, whose faculty was to organize and defend, and who would here act upon the defensive, to take this defeated and broken army and reorganize it. He knew full well the infirmities of McClellan, who was not an affirmative man; was worth little for an onward movement; but beyond any other officer he had the confidence of the army, and he could more efficiently and speedily reorganize it and put it in condition than any other general. If the Secretary of War, or any member of the Cabinet, would name a general that could do this as promptly and well, he would appoint him. For an active fighting general he was sorry to say McClellan was a failure; he had "the slows"; was never ready for battle, and probably never would be; but for this exigency, when organization and defence were needed, he considered him the best man for the service, and the country must have the benefits of his talents though he had behaved badly. The President said he had seen and given his opinion to General Halleck, who was still General-in-Chief; but Halleck had no plan or views of his own, proposed to do nothing himself, and fully approved his calling upon McClellan.

In stating what he had done the President was deliberate, but firm and decisive. His language and manner were kind and affectionate, especially toward two of the members, who were greatly disturbed; but every person present felt that he was truly the chief, and every one knew his decision was as fixed and unalterable as if given out with the imperious command and determined will of Andrew Jackson. A long discussion followed, closing with acquiescence in the decision of the President, but before separating, the Secretary of the Treasury expressed his apprehension that the reinstatement of McClellan would prove a national calamity.

In this instance the President, unaided by others, put forth with firmness and determination the executive will—the one-man power—against the temporary general sense of the community as well as of his Cabinet, two of whom it has been generally supposed had with him an influence almost as great as the Secretary of State. They had been ready to make

issue and resign their places unless McClellan was dismissed; but knowing their opposition, and in spite of it and of the general dissatisfaction in the community, the President had in that perilous moment exalted him to new and important trusts. In an interview with the President on the succeeding Friday, when only he and myself were present, he unburthened his mind freely. Military matters were still in confusion, without plan or purpose at headquarters. The Secretary of War, under Pope's defeat and McClellan's reinstatement, was not only disappointed, but dejected and dispirited. The President said most of our troubles grew out of military jealousies. Whether changing the plan of operations (discarding McClellan and placing Pope in command) was wise or not, was not now the matter in hand. These things, right or wrong, had been done. If the Administration had erred, the country should not have been made to suffer and our brave men cut down and butchered. Pope should have been sustained, but he was not. These personal and professional quarrels came in. Whatever may have been said to the contrary, it could not be denied that the army was with McClellan. He had so skilfully handled his troops in not getting to Richmond as to retain their confidence. The soldiers certainly had not transferred their confidence to Pope. He could, however, do no more good in this quarter. It was humiliating, after what had transpired and all we knew, to reward McClellan and those who failed to do their whole duty in the hour of trial, but so it was. Personal considerations must be sacrificed for the public good. He had kept aloof from the dissensions that prevailed, and intended to; "but," said he, "I must have McClellan to reorganize the army and bring it out of chaos. There has been a design, a purpose in breaking down Pope, without regard to the consequences to the country, that is atrocious. It is shocking to see and know this, but there is no remedy at present. McClellan has the army with him." These were the views and this the course of the President when there was general dismay in the country and confusion in the army, the rebels near the intrenchments of Washington, and some of the Cabinet alarmed and preparing to leave. The President was not insensible to the deficiencies or ignorant of the faults of McClellan, nor yet blind to and stubborn as regarded his better qualities. In placing him at the head of the army he went counter to the wishes of his friends, and forgetful of all else he subdued every personal feeling, and in the spirit of unselfish patriotism resolved to do what was for the true interest of the country. Had the General followed up the battle of Antietam, which took place a fortnight later, he would have retrieved the misfortunes of the peninsula and given the President additional reason to congratulate himself on the reinstatement; but the old dilatory infirmity remained, which strengthened the influence that persistently opposed him, and led to his being retired from the command of the army.

The President was a much more shrewd and accurate observer of the characteristics of men—better and more correctly formed an estimate of their power and capabilities—than the Secretary of State or most others. Those in the public service he closely scanned, but was deliberate in forming a conclusion adverse to any one he had appointed. In giving or withdrawing confidence he was discriminating and just in his final decision; careful never to wound unnecessarily the sensibilities of any for their infirmities, always ready to praise, but nevertheless firm and resolute in discharging the to him always painful duty of censure, reproof, or dismissal.

Du Pont he classed in the naval service with McClellan in the military. Both were intelligent, accomplished, and valuable officers in their way, but neither was the man for fierce encounter and desperate fighting. The two until tried had his support and all the confidence to which they were entitled, or which either had reason to expect. If the results at Port Royal were not followed up with the energy and vigor anticipated, the fault was, he justly considered, as much with the military as with the navy. But in the autumn of 1862 and winter of 1863 extensive preparations were made for retaking Fort Sumter and the capture of Charleston. Du Pont visited Washington in the autumn, and had consulted on the subject, but would listen to no suggestion that any other officer should be detailed for that especial service, which he claimed as a right and as within the limits of his blockade. Extraordinary efforts were accordingly made by the Navy

Department, which gave him a large portion of the best officers and vessels in the service that he might be successful. But time wore on, with no more effective demonstration than had been made by the army of the Potomac on the York peninsula. Du Pont, like McClellan, was constantly asking for more reinforcements, and the Navy Department strained every nerve to aid him, and often answered his requisitions at the expense of other squadrons.

The President, as well as the whole country, felt greatly interested in this subject; not that Charleston was of any great strategic importance, but it was the hotbed of secession, and there the rebellion had its origin. It was winter or early spring, and nothing had been accomplished, when the President one day said to me that he had but slight expectation that we should have any great success from Du Pont. "He, as well as McClellan," said Mr. Lincoln, "hesitates—has 'the slows.' McClellan always wanted more regiments; Du Pont is everlastingly asking for more gunboats—more ironclads. He will do nothing with any. He has intelligence and system, and will maintain a good blockade. You did well in selecting him for that command, but he will never take Sumter or get to Charleston. He is no Farragut, though unquestionably a good routine officer, who obeys orders and in a general way carries out his instructions." A few weeks served to verify all that the President had said on the subject. Du Pont died without planting the flag on Sumter or visiting Charleston.

The distinctive measure of Mr. Lincoln's administration, beyond all others that which makes it an era in our national history, is the decree of emancipation. This movement, almost revolutionary, was a step not anticipated by him when elected, and which neither he nor any of his Cabinet were prepared for or would have assented to when they entered upon their duties. He and they had, regardless of party discipline, resisted the schemes for the extension of slavery into free territory under the sanction of federal authority. All of them, though of different parties, were and ever had been opposed to slavery, but not one of them favored any interference with it by the national Government in the States where it was established or permitted. The assumption, after the acquisition of territory from Mexico, that slavery was a national and not a local institution, opened a new controversy in American politics, which contributed to the disintegration of old party organizations, each of which became in a measure sectional. The dissenting elements resisted the centralizing claim that slavery was national, not local; and ultimately, after a struggle of several years, they threw off old party allegiance and combined under a new organization, thenceforward known as Republican. In the first stages of this movement neither Mr. Lincoln nor Mr. Seward participated. Both of them had sympathized with what was known as the Free-soil party in 1848, but declined to become identified with it. They were politicians, and not then prepared to abandon the organization with which they had previously acted. Mr. Lincoln, with the free thought and independence of the men of the West, less trained and bound to party than the disciplined politicians in the old States, holding no official position, a quiet but observing and reflecting citizen, truthful, honest, faithful to his convictions, and with the mental strength and courage to avow and maintain them, early appreciated the important principles involved in this rising question, and boldly cast off the shackles of party in defence of the right, and earnestly, irrespective of any and all parties, opposed the extension and aggressions of slavery. Mr. Seward was in those days in office, trammelled by party followers and party surroundings. Trained during his whole public career in the severest discipline of party, indebted to it for his high position, always subservient to its decrees and requirements, active and exacting in enforcing its obligations, he had not the independence and moral stamina to free himself from the restraints and despotism of party, whatever were his sympathies, until that organization disbanded. The people of the West, who knew Mr. Lincoln and appreciated his capabilities, tried in 1856 to place him on the ticket with Fremont as a candidate for Vice-President. Although but slightly known in the East, such was the zeal and enthusiasm in his favor of those who knew him, that nothing but the expediency of selecting an Eastern man to be associated with Fremont, who was from the West, prevented his nomination in-

stead of Dayton. From the start he was a prominent Republican champion and leader, while Mr. Seward, a partisan politician, held off; was reluctant to leave the party with which he had been associated, hoping to make the new movement subservient to or a part of the Whig party. Mr. Lincoln had no such purpose; the principles involved were with him above mere party. With no fortune, unaided by metropolitan funds or pecuniary assistance from any quarter, he gave his time and mind with unstinted devotion to the cause of freedom, and in his memorable campaign with Douglas, alone and unassisted, he, through the empire State of the West, met the Senatorial giant on the questions of the extension of slavery, the rights of the States, the grants to and limitation of the powers of the General Government, and displayed ability and power which won the applause of the country, and drew from Douglas himself expressions of profound respect.

When the Republicans, in convention at Chicago, chose their standard-bearer, they wisely and properly selected as their representative the sincere and able man who had no great money power in his interest, no disciplined lobby, no host of party followers, but who, like David, confided in the justice of his cause, and with the simple weapons of truth and right met the Goliath of slavery aggression, before assembled multitudes, in many a well-contested debate. The popular voice was not in error, or its confidence misplaced, when it selected and elected Lincoln.

After his election, and after the war commenced, events forced upon Mr. Lincoln the emancipation of the slaves in the rebellious States. It was his act, a bold step, an executive measure originating with him, and was, as stated in the memorable appeal at the close of the final proclamation, invoking for it the considerate judgment of mankind, warranted alone by military necessity. He and the Cabinet were aware that the measure involved high and fearful responsibility, for it would alarm the timid everywhere, and alienate, at least for a time, the bold in the border States. The act itself could not have been justified or excused, and would never have been attempted, had the country been at peace; yet the movement seemed aggravated and more hazardous from the fact that the Union was weakened and imperilled by civil war. Results have proved that there was in the measure profound thought, statesmanship, courage, and far-seeing sagacity—consummate executive and administrative ability, which was, after some reverses, crowned with success. The nation, emerging from gloom and disaster, and the whole civilized world, united in awarding honor and gratitude to the illustrious man who had the mind to conceive and the courage and firmness to decree the emancipation of a race. Ten years after this event, when the patriot and philanthropist who decreed emancipation had been years in his grave, an attempt is made on a solemn occasion to award to one of his subordinates the honor and credit which justly belong to the great chief who decreed it. The Albany "Memorial Address" dwells on public measures, particularly during the war, but makes no allusion to this great act of Lincoln, nor to his merits in the great cause of freedom, for which he labored and in which he died, but declares his Secretary of State, a lifelong partisan politician, was always opposed to slavery, and that he "directed affairs for the benefit of the nation, through the name of another." It is unnecessary, after what has already been said, to comment on this assumed direction by a subordinate instead of the chief, or on the gross injustice to Mr. Lincoln; but it should be known that the Secretary of State neither originated nor directed the affairs of the Government on the great measure of emancipation. Mr. Seward was undoubtedly opposed to slavery, and so was every member of the Administration, but his opposition never led him to propose any measure of relief to the country, or to take any steps against slavery which would be likely to impair the Whig party or the Whig organization while it existed. No specific act of his—no measure or distinct proposition to emancipate the slaves—is mentioned, for there was none. In the administration of the government he took no advance step on the slavery question. Mr. Lincoln was the pioneer and responsible author, while the Secretary of State studiously avoided any expression of opinion in regard to it. The Secretaries of War and Navy were compelled to act in relation to fugitives from slavery who sought protection under the Union flag—an anomalous question—but they could obtain no counsel or advice from the Secretary of State how to act. He not only

avoided giving an opinion, but recommended that the Administration should abstain from any decisive stand on that controverted and embarrassing subject.

The President, who is represented as incompetent for his position, and whose mind in 1861, it is said, "had not even opened to the crisis," was reluctant to meddle with this disturbing element. Yet earlier than others he rightly appreciated what the Government would have to encounter, and was convinced it must be taken in hand and disposed of. The magnitude of the rebellion, and the nature of the contest, compelled him, after the civil war had been carried on for twelve months, to grapple with this formidable subject. His first movement, in March, 1862, was cautious and deliberate, characterized by great prudence and forethought, and designed not to alarm the friends of the Union by any harsh or offensive proceeding. It was an ameliorated plan for the gradual abolition of slavery by action of the States respectively, with coöperation and assistance of the General Government. This plan of voluntary and compensated emancipation was pressed upon Congress and the border slave States, with great earnestness, by the President. Mr. Blair and Mr. Bates, both residents of the border slave States, were the only members of the Cabinet who cordially seconded these first early measures in the cause of emancipation. Their associates cheerfully assented to and acquiesced in the proposition, but had neither faith nor zeal in its success; nor did Mr. Seward or any one of them suggest a different or more available plan for national relief. The subject was beset on every side with difficulty, requiring for its manipulation and disposition the highest order of administrative and executive ability. No one more than the President was impressed with the difficulties to be met, and at the same time with the imperative necessity of decisive action. The details of these proceedings, and the final determined stand taken by him—not by the Secretary of State or any of the Cabinet—to decree by an executive order the emancipation of the slaves in the rebellious States, have been elsewhere related. It was after all efforts for voluntary emancipation by the States interested, with pecuniary aid from the national treasury, had failed. To Mr. Seward and myself the President communicated his purpose, and asked our views, on the 13th of July, 1862. It was the day succeeding his last unsuccessful and hopeless conference with the representatives in Congress from the border slave States, at a gloomy period of our affairs, just after the reverses of our armies under McClellan before Richmond. The time, he said, had arrived when we must determine whether the slave element should be for or against us. Mr. Seward, represented as a superior in "native intellectual power," and as having forty years previously chosen his side, and as at that early period having claimed "a right in the government to emancipate slaves," was appalled and not prepared for this decisive step, when Mr. Lincoln made known to us his intention, by an executive order, to emancipate the slaves. Startled with so broad and radical a proposition, he informed the President that the consequences of such an act were so momentous that he was not prepared to advise on the subject without further reflection. While Mr. Seward hesitated, and had the subject under consideration, the President deliberately prepared his preliminary proclamation, which met the approval, or at least the acquiescence, of the whole Cabinet, though there were phases of opinion not entirely in accord with the proceeding. Mr. Blair, an original emancipationist, and committed to the principle, thought the time to issue the order inopportune, and Mr. Bates desired that the deportation of the colored race should be coincident with emancipation. Aware that there were shades of difference among his counsellors, and hesitation and doubt with some in view of the vast responsibility and its consequences, the President devised his own scheme, held himself alone accountable for the act, and, unaided and unassisted, prepared each of the proclamations of freedom. Mr. Seward in no way or form originated or was responsible for that important measure, did not in any way "direct affairs" in regard to it, was in no other way cognizant of it beyond his colleagues except as communicated to him and myself on the 13th of July, at its inception. Yet in the "Memorial Address" Mr. Seward is represented as the lifelong leading opponent of slavery, beyond others the master spirit in the Lincoln Administration. The President and this great

event are ignored, and the inference is intended to be conveyed that the Secretary of State, who "chose his side" in the morning of life adverse to slavery, is entitled to the credit; for it is represented that the President was a mere secondary personage, and the Secretary of State directed affairs in the name of Mr. Lincoln, who was to "reap the honors due chiefly to Mr. Seward's labors."

To unfold the leaves of suppressed history, and correct the errors and perversions which interested—and many of them still living—persons have spread abroad and inculcated, is a thankless task, and will subject him who performs it to partisan abuse. It is scarcely to be expected that the present generation will know or be able to appreciate the labors and acts of those who, intrusted with the government in a trying period, took upon themselves immense and unprecedented responsibilities, or that a rightful discrimination will at this early day, if ever, be made as regards those who participated in the movements which eventuated in the salvation of the Union and the emancipation of a race. The late labored effort of the distinguished gentleman of an historic family and name to depreciate the talents and services of Abraham Lincoln, and to crown another with honors that justly belong to him, is a specimen of lamentable partisan prejudice and error. It is but one and perhaps the last of many attempts of a similar character, to take from the brow of Lincoln the wreath of merit that is justly his—to deprive him of the reward due for his labor, and give to another credit for his acts. It is not the first time in our history when like injustice has been witnessed toward our Chief Magistrates. Volumes have been written to prove that Hamilton controlled Washington and directed the affairs of the nation in the name of his chief. Van Buren, it was claimed, controlled the imperious will of Jackson and dictated his measures. Undoubtedly each had influence with his chief, perhaps more than he deserved. The same may be said of Mr. Seward, who had undeniably influence with Mr. Lincoln, but who was no more the directing mind of the Administration of Lincoln, but really much less, than was Hamilton of Washington or Van Buren of Jackson. Both Hamilton and Seward are charged with having given countenance to this false impression, which, however, redounds to the credit of neither.

In these papers, written to correct the misconceptions of Mr. Adams, and misrepresentations of the Albany "Memorial Address," incidents of what occurred would, I thought, better than mere contradictory assertions, illustrate the acts, the executive management and administrative ability, as well as the capacity and mental energy, of the men whose traits are involved in the statements which have been made.

Of the incidents that took place during the administration of Mr. Lincoln, some of which and the attending circumstances could not have been disclosed at the time of their occurrence, there are in most cases living witnesses. The transactions of an earlier date are of public notoriety and matters of record, commencing with the organized anti-masonic proscription, and embracing the rise and fall of that and subsequent parties, down to and including the much misrepresented proceedings at the Chicago Convention in 1860.

It has been no part of my purpose to magnify or overstate the qualities or to give undue credit to the labors and abilities of Mr. Lincoln, still less to do injustice to Mr. Seward, who is represented in the "Memorial Address" as overshadowing his chief. Mr. Lincoln was in many respects a remarkable, though I do not mean to say an infallible man. No true delineation or photograph of his intellectual capacity and attributes has ever been given, nor shall I attempt it. His vigorous and rugged but comprehensive mind, his keen and shrewd sagacity, his intellectual strength and mental power, his genial, kindly temperament, with charity for all and malice toward none—his sincerity, unquestioned honesty, and homely suavity, made him popular as well as great. Had he survived to this day, the Albany "Memorial Address" would have been of a different character, and its pages not marred with paragraphs which reflect on his ability and do injustice to his memory.

Gideon Welles.

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